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EDITED BY A HEATHEN IN THE INTEREST OF GOOD MORALS.

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REV. R. H. SAWYER

OF THE "CHRISTIAN" CHURCH
ON THE IMMORTALITY OF
THE SOUL
AND THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD.

I have been sent, I suppose for criticism, an extract from the Anaconda (Montana) Standard, containing a sermon of Rev. R. H. Sawyer, of the Christian (Campbellite) church, on the immortality of the soul, and the existence of a God.

Nearly all of the sermon is a string of school-boy "eloquence" the only attempt at argument being in the following two extracts:

"The atheist boldly answers, 'No! Man lives but for a brief season, and dies like a beast to live no more—eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow ye shall die.'"

"The Roman Empire listened to the atheistic doctrine of Epicurus, and sank into a state of immorality and shame unparalleled in the history of other nations. The past century witnessed a repetition of the results of following atheistic teachings in the bloody scenes of the French Revolution. D'Alembert, Diderot, Voltaire and others filled France with the teachings of infidelity and won her people away from a faith in God and hope of a future life. The streets of their cities ran red with blood. No man's life was safe; no woman's virtue was respected; all industry was paralyzed—homes were neglected, the marriage relation was despised, and vice, crime, unnatural lust swayed the souls of men and instituted a reign of terror whose watchword was atheism. Husband, father, will you accept the doctrine of atheism and sway your home with the thought that we live but for a time and die like the beast? The history of all ages proves that to rob a man of his hope of a life beyond is to rob him of virtue, honor, truth. The hope of immortality and the practice of morality are inseparable in the life of man."

"I see a little home in far off Bethany. Mary and Martha and Lazarus were its happy inmates. But it is all dark now. The curtains are drawn and the friends tread softly as they come and go. With sad countenances and subdued tones they speak in their honest efforts to comfort the grief-stricken sisters. Lazarus is dead—yonder in the tomb, wrapped in the cements of death his still, cold body has lain for four days—may it be a century to these breaking hearts. But hear the words of Jesus of Nazareth as He comes speaking peace to these troubled souls: 'Thy brother shall rise again! Oh joy and gladness! Oh happiness unspeakable! Death shall not triumph over life. A broken home and shattered hearts shall be restored again.'"

My relations with the "Christian" church have been such that I would naturally want to say all that I could for the intelligence of its communion, but there is not a single broad-minded man among its clergy.

If all that "Rev." Sawyer here says were absolutely true it would be no argument, at all, to prove the existence of a God.

It is a question no more determinable by the goodness or wickedness of men than is the mooted question of the habitability of the planet Mars.

If every atheist that was ever born had been a bad man and every Christian that ever lived had been a good man, or woman, the fact would not have the remotest bearing upon the questions of the immortality of the soul or the existence of a God.

And yet as opposed to the teaching of this revered gentleman, there is the fact that Ingersoll and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Herbert Spencer, the most distinguished Infidels of the world, have all died in this young century, the most honored people that have died in it, while hardly a week passes that the papers do not report the villainy—generally connected with women—of some preacher or priest.

The ignorance of Rev. Sawyer is displayed by his citing the case of Epicurus to show the evil effect of atheism.

The people commonly understand, because the word Epicurus, which is derived from Epicurus means, in these days, a gourmand or glutton, that Epicurus, the atheist, taught excess in eating and drinking; but the philosophy of Epicurus was exactly the reverse of this. Epicurus was exactly that being happy should be the great end and aim of our lives, and he taught that we should eat and drink in the way to produce the greatest happiness, and said therefore, that we should be abstemious in our eating and drinking and not gluttonous, as Rev. Sawyer and other semi-intelligent people generally suppose.

All intelligent people know that the Roman Empire in its heathenism was the greatest government that the world ever saw, and that during that time it made the laws that the United States adopted and lives under to this day, and that when Rome accepted the Christian religion it degenerated into one of the lowest of all governments.

The story of the French Revolution, as history tells it, has been told to Christians thousands of times by Infidels, but the Christians never learn it because they do not want to learn it.

For three hundred years before the French revolution, the government and the church, royalty and the priests, had been solidly united and the debauchery and lewdness that characterized that period are without their parallels in history.

As a sample of the morals of that day I state the fact that it was a custom that grew into the law of the land that when a maiden married it was the right of the priest to have her to himself, the first night.

This condition of affairs went on until the people arose in a mass and killed 6,000 priests and royal people. From that time until the present day France has regularly advanced and has a government precisely like ours except that her senators are elected as we elect congressmen, and there is a growing tendency in this country to elect senators by the people just as France does.

As a result of this atheistic revolution the people of Paris tore down the bastille, the famous prison, and sent the key to George Washington. I have seen the monument that stands where the bastille stood, and it has the statue of the heathen god, Mercury, on top of it, and I have seen the key hanging in Washington's house, at Mount Vernon.

INDIFFERENCE TO WORSHIP

WHY MEN DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH.

Many Reasons from Both Clergy and Laymen—Environment Has Much to do With it—Ministers Are Blamed for Preaching Only to the Rich—Life too Strenuous During the Week—Costs too Much Says Another—the Many Attractions and the Sunday Newspaper is Another Reason.

The great and absorbing question, the falling off in church attendance, the more noticeably among men, is a problem confronting the entire Christian world, and one not easy of solution. While there are a thousand and one reasons given for the falling off, the most generally accepted reason is that the age—the times in which we live, have so changed, that a different form of theology is needed to meet the demands of the more advanced thought, etc. We append a few sample reasons as given by some of the leading clergy and other observers:

"The Congregational conference in New Haven recently Judge Gideon H. Welch delivered a strong address on 'Why Men Do Not Attend Church.' He showed that the mental and physical side of man's nature is getting physical of cultivation, while the spiritual side is seriously neglected. Several things helped this state of affairs, among them the Sunday newspaper, the automobile, or 'devil wagon,' as he called it, trolleys and too eager pursuit of wealth, but he could devise no effective means to lessen the prevailing evils. He scored the wealthy philanthropist, who, in his old age, contributed generously to the poor to satisfy pangs of remorse caused by the memory of duty undone in the past. Pulpit has not the influence it once had."

Rev. Dr. Anderson, pastor of the First Congregational church at Waterbury, last week expressed himself on the subject as follows: "The number of non-church goers is increasing much. Even in Catholic churches non-church attendance, especially among the young men, is increasing. It is difficult to answer the question, 'What is the reason for the decrease in church attendance and a corresponding increase in the number of non-church goers?' No one answer covers the case nor can a general answer be given in a few words. The decrease in church attendance is not confined to churches in any one country. It is the same in Europe as in America, among Catholics as well as Protestants. Among Protestants and Catholics there is a drifting away from ecclesiasticism, but not from religion. The majority of the people who remain away from church believe in destiny, immortality, in a personal God, but do not believe in attendance church. Of course the claims of the Catholic church upon its members is different than that of the Protestant church. A Catholic is under more obligation to attend mass. Furthermore, a thorough going church attendant among the Catholics is a thorough believer in the infallibility of the church and of the infallibility of the pope. There is no such belief among Protestants. Neither are they under any obligation to attend church. The claim of the gospel is not recognized now as it was in former years. Among the working classes the feeling is spreading that the church represents capital versus labor. The working classes have a certain dignity and like to dress as well and make as nice a showing on Sunday as other people. It is a widespread alienation from church going among the masses. The pulpit has not the influence that it once had. The Protestants of New England were brought up to think that the main part of the service was the sermon. Now the people do not depend upon the sermon for knowledge. The pulpit has been replaced in this regard by the newspapers, books and magazines. A large amount of the preaching is upon subjects whose spirit is merely secular."

Invasion of a Materialistic Spirit. Rev. John G. Davenport, pastor of the Second Congregational church at Waterbury, gives this reason: "I am inclined to think that there is a decrease in the church attendance and a corresponding increase in the number of non-church goers. This does not mean that the people are not so much influenced by Christianity as in the past, but that there is a growing feeling that Christianity doesn't consist of church attendance solely, but to the practicing of its teachings in every day life. Besides this growing feeling I believe that the increase of non-church goers may be attributed to the invasion of materialistic spirit. Furthermore, the church doesn't hold up threats as in days past. Fifty years ago the people were compelled by theology to attend church, but such theology is not taught to-day. Formerly the pulpit was the only means for dissemination of knowledge. Now its place is partly taken by a large quantity of good literature, books and newspapers. I think that some members have been driven away by the new theology." The Rev. Louis M. Holden, Dr. Davenport's assistant, said during the transition from the old to the new theology that some people became disgruntled at the preaching of the old theology and left the church.

On Saturday night, December 19th, Mr. Hughes telephoned me that he had decided to continue the publication of the Blade.

If he had not decided to continue its publication I had about \$70 due me for my share of Dog Fennel and Behind the Bars, that I intended to use, and whatever else might come to me from those books, to continue the publication of the paper, and I was going to print only the first two pages of it as it is now—that is half its present size—until I could print it the full size or stop it altogether. Of course I cannot tell, any better than any of you can, what would have been the final outcome.

As it is now the Blade will continue its full size.

Of course I feel deeply grateful to those who, with their kind words and their money, one or both, have stood by the little paper in this crisis and helped it to weather the storm.

Whether the friends of the Blade will keep up this interest in trying to sustain it, of course, I do not know, but what has occurred leads me to hope that they will.

I want to express my gratitude, in which I am sure Mr. Hughes would join me, to the Infidel papers that have lately expressed to me their sympathy with the Blade in its distress. They are the Investigator, The Searchlight, Secular Thought, the Torch of Reason, Occult Thought, and Right Reason, and I hope that the friends of the Blade will not forget their kindness to this paper, at a time when it needed friends.

Certainly the trial has developed that the Blade has some friends who are as genuinely and unselfishly devoted to it as any newspaper in the world has ever had. I am especially proud of the fact that so many of these have been women, old and young, and so many of them have been old men.

It is astonishing how many men who are older than I am—65 years the day upon which I write this; Sunday, December 20th, 1903—are friends of this paper. I suppose though that this is from the fact that I am, probably, the oldest of the Infidel editors, now that old Bro. Green has gone.

I am very proud of the fact that so many of those who have given their money and their sympathy were poor, abiding men. I am so proud of the fact that in the support of this paper there is absolutely no difference between the North and the South. It seems to me now that the two States in a competition for the championship in the support of this paper, are Ohio and Texas, whose sons stood on opposite sides in our civil war, and though I have always lived in the South I have just as true friends and as many among the veterans of the Union army, in our civil war, as if I had always lived in the North.

Ordinary newspapers that have circulated as long as these as the Blade, make their livings on advertising, and they can do this because their circulations are only local.

Infidel newspapers cannot get advertising even from Infidels who have business that might be benefited by a paper like the Blade, and so we have to rely for support, at the low rates at which the Blade is published, and I do sincerely hope that all friends of the Blade who can, will at once begin to help it in the way of sending their job printing to us, getting new subscribers, or ordering a copy of Dog Fennel or Behind the Bars, price \$1 each.

The Blade wishes all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

A BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON QUESTIONS.

1. Where was Gibeon?
2. A little north of Jerusalem.
3. Who went up there?
4. Solomon.
5. What came to him?
6. A dream.
7. Who spoke to him in the dream?
8. The Lord.
9. What did he wish to know?
10. Solomon's chief desire.

What was Solomon's request? An understanding heart.

Why did he ask that? So as to be a good king.

Did that please the Lord? It did.

Did the Lord answer the prayer? Yes.

What else did he give Solomon? Riches and honor.

THE BLADE WILL CONTINUE

WITH MR. HUGHES AS PUBLISHER.

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JUST A LITTLE STORY.

My son, R. Leland Moore, travels for a clothing house. The clerk of the best hotel in Knoxville, Tenn., is a good friend to him, and always calls him "R. Leland." My son was in the hotel lately and that clerk said to him "R. Leland." My son was in the Reverend Moore of Kentucky?"

My son said, "Yes, he is related to our family."

The clerk said, "Well, he is the greatest man in the United States."

My son said, "Thank you for the compliment. That is what we think. He is my father."

The clerk caught my son by the hand with both of his hands and congratulated him most cordially. My son loaned him a copy of "Dog Fennel." The clerk had to rise at five o'clock in the morning but he read Dog Fennel until three o'clock.

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SHORT OF MONEY IS NEW POPE

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS AT THE VATICAN SAID TO BE IN A BAD WAY.

WHERE IRISH CATHOLIC WOMEN'S MONEY GOES.

Rome, Dec. 8.—As soon as Cardinal Del Val took over from Cardinal Mocenni the administration of the Vatican finances he set to work to disentangle the rather complicated mass of the book-keeping department.

This disclosed an absolutely appalling state of things. It seems that the late pope, at least during the last ten or twelve years of his pontificate, lived, one might say, from hand to mouth.

Since the loss sustained by the Vatican administration of about \$5,000,000 under the regime of Mgr. Fochi, and, still later, after several thefts of large sums from his own private apartments, Pope Leo grew diffident and suspicious of everybody.

The frequent gifts of large sums of money made personally to him by foreign visitors as private donations or as collections for Peter's Pence he refused to turn over to the regular administration of the church, because he considered them safer in his own custody, and he found hiding places for all these offerings in the nooks and corners of his own apartment.

From time to time, whenever an opportunity offered or a trusted messenger like Del Val was available, Pope Leo used to send large sums for investment in foreign banks, especially in London, but of late years even this practice was discontinued.

The consequences of this policy are just now beginning to appear, and it is a problem for Cardinal Del Val to discover how several millions of francs have disappeared.

One explanation is that the late pope often lent money to needy prelates and cardinals and to a few foreign princes and dispossessed pretenders, besides granting loans to several noble families of Rome, which, owing to the loss of the temporal power and their continued faithfulness to the old order of things, found themselves on the brink of bankruptcy.

Two of these families are the ancient ones of the Borghese and Massimo, the latter of which was enabled to keep its famous state carriage and an appearance of style only through the generosity of Pius IX. and the late pope.

The Borghese family also had lost all of its property through mistaken investments in Roman real estate and was compelled recently to sell to the city its magnificent palace and the famous villa on the walls of Rome.

When the late pope scared off to glory, it was estimated that he left \$20,000,000. The donations and presents given him were something enormous.

Now it transpires that the treasures were stolen from him, and that like other old people he tried to hide his money in nooks and corners about his room. But the holy gang of thieves around him was too sly for the old fellow, and kept tapping him till he had nothing left.

This is enough to show that the Vatican is infested with a ravenous gang of thieves—a regular Mafia.

How could they be otherwise? It is a regular system of hold-up in the first place, and what more could be expected?

Among certain classes of thieves there is some honor, but among the holy brand, it doesn't seem to exist.

The above information ought to go to all the poor old Catholic Irish wash women in the country, so they could see where their money goes; so they could see that it goes to help keep up old tied, broken down Roman families, that they may be able to appear on the streets in carriages and throw on the sty's.

Sarto will have a sort of poor Christmas this year with no money and all that big palace full of hungry monks and soldiers to feed.

It is all a matter of money with the pope. Should the Catholic people ever get tired of being humbugged then old petticoats will have to get into overalls and go to work.

If it could be generally known that that Italian gang of thieves first rob poor deluded people and then rob each other—rob even the holy pope—people would come to their senses sometime, and dump the whole business.

W.

My son, R. Leland Moore, travels for a clothing house. The clerk of the best hotel in Knoxville, Tenn., is a good friend to him, and always calls him "R. Leland." My son was in the hotel lately and that clerk said to him "R. Leland." My son was in the Reverend Moore of Kentucky?"

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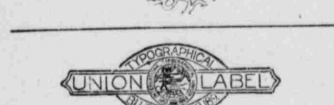
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Charles L. Moore
Editor



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"THE DAMNED STUFF CALLED ALCOHOL."

I believe that alcohol, to a certain degree, demoralizes those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it.

I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death and dishonor, it demoralizes everybody that touches it.

I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime.

All you have to do is to think of the deaths—of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread; or the men of genius it has wrecked; or the imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing.

And when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the prisons, and of the scaffolds upon either bank, I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"Keep Church and State forever separate."—Grant.

"In no sense whatsoever is this government founded upon the Christian religion."—Washington.

"The divorce between Church and State should be absolute."—Garfield.

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